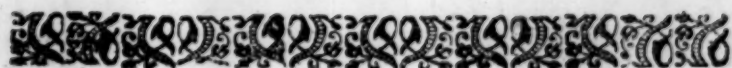


2.



Mr. *Appleton's*
Election SERMON,

May 26. 1742.



8



W

*THE great Blessing of GOOD RULERS, depends upon
GOD's giving his Judgments & his Righteousness to them.*

A

S E R M O N 2,

Preached before His EXCELLENCY

William Shirley, Esq;

GOVERNOUR,

His HONOUR the

Lieutenant GOVERNOUR,

The HONOURABLE

His Majesty's Council,

AND

House of Representatives

Of the Province of the MASSACHUSETTS-BAY,
in NEW-ENGLAND, *May 26. 1742.*

Being the Day for the Electing His Majesty's
COUNCIL for said Province.

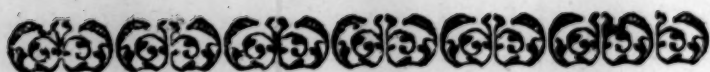
By *Nathaniel Appleton, A. M.*
Pastor of the First Church in *Cambridge.*

Psal. cxix. 24. *Thy Testimonies are my Delight, and my Coun-
SELLORS.*

Psal. xl 8. — *Yea thy Law is within my Heart.*

Prov. xiv. 34. *Righteousness exalteth a Nation.* —

BOSTON: Printed by J. DRAPER, Printer to His Ex-
cellency the GOVERNOUR and COUNCIL, for
S. ELIOT in Cornhill. 1742.



At a Council held at the Council-
Chamber in *Boston*, upon *Thursday*
May 27. 1742.

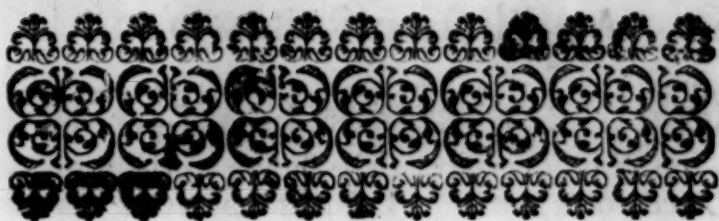
Voted,

THAT *Francis Foxcroft* and
Samuel Danforth, Esqrs; be
desired to give the Rev. Mr.
Nathaniel Appleton, of *Cambridge*, the
Thanks of this Board for his Ser-
mon preached Yesterday, before the
Great and General Court or Assem-
bly, and to request a Copy thereof
for the Press.



J. Willard, Secr.





A N

Election S E R M O N.

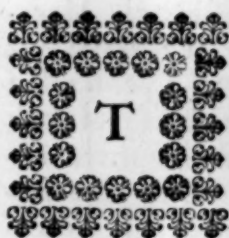


P S A L. lxxii. 1, 2, 3.

*G I V E the King thy Judgments, O G O D, and
thy Righteousness unto the King's Son.*

*He shall Judge thy People with Righteousness, and
thy Poor with Judgment.*

*The Mountains shall bring Peace to the People, and
the little Hills by Righteousness.*



H E Peace, Happiness and Prosperity of a People depend very much upon the Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of those in Government ; and one of the most comprehensive Blessings we can ask, or desire for a People, is wise and good RULERS. Such as are well acquainted with the Rules of Justice, Truth and Goodness ; and have a Principle within that will prompt them at all Times to a steady Conformity to them. By this Means the injured will

will be righted, the Oppressed relieved, and the Power of the Oppressor broken to Pieces. This is the Way for Mercy to be shown to the proper Objects of it, and for Justice to be done to all. And such a People must needs be in the Way of Peace, and of flourishing in all Prosperity.

But then the Question is, How shall Rulers be thus accomplished for Government? and, What Course shall a People take that they may be blessed with such to rule over them? The general Answer to which is that in James i. 17. *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights;* Surely then the Father of Lights, who alone giveth Wisdom, and out of whose Mouth cometh Knowledge and Understanding, is to be acknowledged, and in a devout, religious manner sought unto, as ever we would receive such Blessings from him.

Our pious Ancestors had a just Sense of this, who when they met for the choice of Rulers, and when Rulers met for the exercise of Government, were wont to open all their Meetings with Prayer. And altho' we have lost much of the Religion of our Fathers; yet blessed be GOD, we still retain such a Sense of our Dependance upon Him, that many of these religious Customs are still upheld. And this anniversary Solemnity for the choice of Councillors, has always been looked upon as an Affair of such great Importance to the civil and religious Interests of this People, that it never has, and I pray GOD it never may be proceeded upon, without the publick Acknowledgement of GOD, and taking some seasonable Counsels from
the

An Election SERMON. 3

the Divine Oracles, not only for a wise and faithful Management in the Affairs of this Day; but in all the following Acts of Government, that GOD in his Providence may call any of his Servants unto.

The royal Psalmist was likewise sensible how much the Blessing of good Rulers depended upon GOD, and that it was he alone who could endow Persons with those Gifts and Qualifications necessary for publick and important Trusts.

Accordingly when he resigned up the Kingdom of *Israel* to his Son *Solomon*, and had him anointed, proclaimed, and in very solemn Pomp led to the Throne & seated upon it; it is tho't that this Psalm was prepared by him, under the Influence of the Divine Spirit, and sung upon that Occasion: For the Title of it is, *A PSALM for Solomon*.

The Psalmist begins with Petition & Prayer, comprehensive of all the Qualifications necessary for a good King and Ruler: And then pleads the Matter with GOD, setting forth the happy Fruits and Effects of there being such a King set over a People: And then he goes on with glorious Predictions and Prophecies, even beyond what was, or could be said of *Solomon's* Reign, altho' the most glorious of any meer earthly Prince.

Accordingly the Jewish as well as Christian Expositors agree, that altho' this Psalm has in part a Reference to King *Solomon's* Reign; yet that it has a View to the *Messiah's* Kingdom, and to the glorious

glorious State thereof ; and that there are Times yet to come, wherein the Prophecies of this Psalm will have their further and fuller Accomplishment.

The beginning of this Psalm seems to refer primarily and principally, if not wholly to *Solomon*, who was then coming to the Throne, and taking the Government of that People, that great People *Israel* upon him. And it affords many useful Instructions to all such as are, or may be advanced to Places of Dignity & Power:

In the Verses that I have read to you, there are three Things more especially to be consider'd,

1st. The *Prayer* that is here made for the King, and by Parity of Reason for *all in Authority*. *Give the King thy Judgments, and thy Righteousness unto the King's Son*. This Prayer is not made for two distinct Persons, the old King and his Son, but for *Solomon*, who was then King, and was the Son of a King.

2dly, The *Argument* that is made use of, to move the Almighty to grant the Petition, taken from the happy *Effect* it would have upon the King, in his governing the People. *He shall judge thy People with Righteousness, and thy Poor with Judgment*.

3dly, Another Argument pleaded with GOD for the bestowment of so great a Blessing upon the King, taken from the happy *Influence* this would have upon the People in general, as to the promoting their Peace, Happiness and Prosperity.

The Mountains shall bring Peace to the People, and the little Hills by Righteousness.

Let

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Let us consider each of these as distinct'y as the Time allotted will allow of; and I trust they will afford some Thoughts suitable to the great Occasions of this Day.

1. Let us consider the *Prayer* ; Give to the King thy *Judgments* O God, and thy *Righteousness* unto the King's Son.

And here,

1. Let us consider *by whom*, and *for whom* this Prayer is made.

Then,

2. Let us consider the *Matter* of the Prayer.

1. Let us consider *by whom*, and *for whom* this Prayer is made.

And now as I have already hinted, it appears to have been made by King David in old Age, and when he was laying aside the Cares and Burdens of Government, and committing them to his Son Solomon.

And it shews the religious Thoughts, as well as the tender Concern, that he had about his Son then coming to the Throne. He had felt the Weight of Government upon his own Shoulders, and knew by Experience what it was to bear the Burden, the Cumbrance, and the Strife of the People ; for altho' they were God's peculiar People, and understood and practised more of the true Religion than any People ; yet they were a very difficult People to govern. David is therefore concerned greatly for his Son, who altho' he was of a superiour Genius, and the King his Father saw it †, yet he was young and

† 1 Kings 2. 9.

tender *. He therefore commends him to God by his earnest Prayers.—A good Example to Parents, and to ancient Rulers, and such as lay aside Government, and leave it to others, they should commend those that succeed them to God by Prayer.—And such as have had a true Sense of the Difficulty of ruling well, will see the Need such stand in continually, of the divine Help, and will be much in Prayer to God for them.

But then this may be considered *as the Prayer of the People for their King, and so for all Rulers under him.*

For altho' *David* seems to be the Composer of the Psalm under the divine Inspiration ; yet we are not to consider it as a Prayer of his own merely for himself, but for publick Use, for *the People* to sing and pray over, in private, but especially in their religious Assemblies, for *as no Prophecy of Scripture is of private Interpretation* †. So neither is it of private Use. And the Prayer of this Psalm was for every Man to make use of, and so may well be considered as the Prayer of the whole People for their King.

And oh how just and reasonable is it for People to pray for their Rulers ! People should consider the Difficulties, and the Perplexities of Government, and how much need they stand in of the divine Help to manage in a wise and skillful Manner ; they should also think how much the Peace and Prosperity of a People depends upon wise and good Rulers. So that not only

* 2 Ch 01. 29. 2. † 2 Pet. 1. 20.

for *their* Sakes, but for the *publick* Good, we should be much in Prayer to God for them; and this is agreeable to the Gospel Rule, *I exhort that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men, for KINGS, and for all that are in AUTHORITY.* 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.

Furthermore, We may consider this as the Prayer of the King for himself. The Title may be read a Psalm of Solomon, and then it may be considered as a Psalm of his own Composing by the Help of the Spirit for his own Use. But take it as it is stiled, *A Psalm for Solomon.* A Psalm not only upon the Account of Solomon, but a Psalm for his Use, to be made use by him. We read Prov. 31. 1. *The Words of King Lemuel, the Prophecy which his Mother taught him.* Most Interpreters understand this to be King Solomon. And as that was a Prophecy which his Mother taught him, so we may consider this Psalm as a Prayer and Prophecy which his Father taught him. And we may suppose him to make Use of this Prayer for himself in his private Devotions; but especially in publick, when he joined with the Congregation in the Chanting or Singing of it.

And surely Rulers ought of all Men to be much in Prayer, and they will be so if they are sensible of the Importance of their governing aright, and of the Dependance they have upon the almighty and the allwise GOD to direct and assist them in it. And truly there is so much Need of the divine Help, in ruling well, and such Necessity of seeking to him for it in order to obtain it, that I can by no Means think any Man fit to be employed in Government that is not a Man of Prayer. And it would be a base betraying the Interest of

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Religion, and the true Interest of a People, to commit any Share of Government to such who are known to live as without God in the World, and that thro' the Atheism or Pride of their Hearts will not seek after God, to direct their Paths for them. *Solomon* set out in Government with Prayer, not only with the Prayer of the Text, but with an excellent Prayer that he made quickly after he came to the Throne †, as well as some time after at the Dedication of the Temple *.

Men's being of bright Parts, of great Learning, and deep Policy won't fit them for Government, unless they be Men of Prayer. For how can a Man expect to be directed, how can he expect to be assisted, prospered and blessed, that won't adore and acknowledge that God by whom *King's Reign and Princes decree Justice, by whom Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth* ||

God may indeed sometimes make use of such irreligious Men, to bring about some Good to his People, because he can over-rule every Thing as he pleases, and bring Good out of Evil; but what Grounds have a People to depend upon it? — God forbid that we should have any irreligious, prayerless Rulers among us; for whatever Qualifications they have besides, this is sufficient to disqualify them for any Place of Power or Trust.

2. Let us now consider the *Prayer it self*, the *Matter of the Prayer*, or the *Prayer of the Petition*.

† 1 Kings 3. 6, 7, 8, 9. * 1 Kings 8 Ch. || Prov, 8. 15.

And

And now this may be considered as a Prayer in general for all *royal Gifts, Vertues and Accomplishments*, for all that *Knowledge, Wisdom and Grace from GOD*, which is *Necessary for that high and important Trust*; and to enable him to the *wise, just and faithful Administration of Government*. As *Solomon* was called to be the chief Ruler over *GOD's People Israel*, so it is a Prayer, that he might be in all respects fitted and qualified for it: That he might have every Accomplishment from *GOD*, equal to such a difficult and important, as well as exalted Station.

But I propose to consider this Prayer more distinctly; and to give you a clearer and more enlarged View of the Contents of it; which may direct every one in Government, in their Prayers for themselves, and others in their Prayers for them.

And here I shall consider this Prayer as containing two distinct Petitions,

1. That *GOD* would give to the King *his Judgments*.
2. That he would give him *his Righteousness*.

Each of which is absolutely necessary to a good Ruler, and both of them together will compleat his Character.

Let us consider them distinctly.

1. Give to the King *thy Judgments*.

Now by *GOD's Judgments* here may be understood,

1. *His Laws, Statutes and Ordinances which are revealed in his Word*.

These oftentimes go by the Name of *Judgments* in Scripture; they being the Rules that *GOD* in his infinite Wisdom has judged proper for Men to conduct and govern themselves by, in their several

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veral Stations & Relations : They are the Judgments and Determinations of GOD's Will revealed to us in his Word, *they are the great Things of his Law, which he hath written unto us.*

And now taking this to be the meaning of GOD's Judgments in the Text ; and then the Prayer of the Petition is, That *G O D would give to the King his written Law, even all the Rules of conducting and managing in every Station and Relation of Life, especially in that of a supreme Ruler : That he would give him this Book of divine Laws and Judgments not only to be in his House, and upon his Shelf ; but that he would give him to read it, to study it, & to get well acquainted with it ; and especially that he would give him the true Understanding and Meaning of it ; that he might know and understand from the Word of GOD, after what manner he would have him to rule and govern that People.*

GOD gave exprefs Commandment by the Mouth of his Servant *Moses*, that the King of Israel should write a Copy of the Divine Law in a Book, and that it should be with him, and that he should read in it all the Days of his Life, that he might learn to fear the Lord his GOD, &c. And now we may suppose that *David's* Prayer for his Son was not meerly that he might have a Copy of the Law, but that he might read in it, and that GOD would open his Understanding, so as to see into the true Meaning of it, and might know how to conduct himself in Government agreeable to it.

And now taking *Judgments* in this Sense, and this is a Prayer highly proper to be made for Kings,

* Deut. 17. 18, 19.

for Governours, and for all that are in Authority.

For altho' our Government is not a *Theocracy*, and we are not under the Divine Government so directly and immediately as the *Jews* were; and altho' we are not under the Law of *Moses*, neither the *Ceremonial* nor the *Judicial Law* as they were; and altho' the Laws & Statutes that were calculated for that People in their particular and peculiar State, are not obligatory upon us, nor are they to be look'd upon as necessary Rules of Government; yet these judicial Laws of the *Israelitish* Nation that are so founded upon the general Principles of Truth and Justice, as to suit with every Form of civil Government, these are to be regarded as the Laws of GOD, and binding upon us, as much as upon them: But this not because they were given to them; but from the Justice and Goodness of them in themselves; and upon that Account are to be adopted into every Constitution of civil Government.

But then if we consider the moral Law as delivered in Thunders and Lightnings from Mount *Sinai*, and then written upon Tables of Stone, to denote the Perpetuity of it; and if we consider the particular Precepts under these general Laws, recorded up and down in the sacred Scriptures, we shall find such Precepts of Wisdom, such Rules of Justice, Truth and Goodness laid down, as are a sufficient Directory for us in every Station of Life, whether private or publick, whether in natural, civil, or sacred Authority. And most certainly, There are no such Maxims of Wisdom, Justice and Goodness to be found any where, as in the holy Scriptures.

And now these are the *Judgments* of GOD that are given to us as well as unto the Nation of
Israel

Israel; for they are founded upon the Nature and Relation of Things, and are of universal and perpetual Obligation. They are Precepts & Rules that GOD in his infinite Wisdom has judged most proper and suitable for such Beings as we, who perfectly knows our Frame, and what Sort of Laws are proper for us to be govern'd by. These are Judgments and Laws that Length of Time, or Changes of Circumstances dont alter the Nature of, nor weaken our Obligation to them. These Laws are founded upon Truth, and Justice and Goodness, and so are Immovable as the Mountaine, and Immutable as GOD himself.

So that, for GOD to give *his Judgments* to *Kings* and *Rulers*, is to give them a clear Understanding of those Rules of moral Government, that he has laid down in his Word, and that they may learn from the Word of GOD, what is right and just, true and good, and that they may frame their Notions of these Things, not meerly from their own Reason, nor from the Morals of the Heathen, but from the Oracles of GOD, which give us the clearest, the fullest and the most refined Notions of moral Vertues, and fix our Obligations to them upon their proper Basis, viz. *The Authority of GOD.*

But then as Men and Rulers, great & learned as they are, are liable to be mistaken as to the Rules given us in the Word of GOD; therefore *the Prayer of this Petition* is to be considered as a Desire that GOD would preserve them from any mistaken Notions with respect to Government and the Rules of it; but that they may have just and true Thoughts agreeable to the Mind of GOD, that they may not from any mistaken Notions of the divine Rule, strain too hard upon the

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Reins of Government on the one Hand, nor slacken them too much on the other. That they may so understand the Will of GOD, as not to run Government, that is designed for the good of Men, into Tyranny and Oppression, nor suffer it to sink into Anarchy and Confusion.

2. By *Judgments* may be, and oftentimes is, understood, *The Judgments that GOD himself executes in his wise and holy, just and gracious Government of the World.*

Judgments, in Scripture, don't always signify the Rules that GOD gives us to walk by. But they sometimes signify the Rules of GOD's own Proceeding, in the Dispensations of his Providence. They signify the Method of his conducting and managing the Affairs of his providential Kingdom. The great GOD exercises a universal Government over the Works of his Hands, and the Ways of his Government, and his *Judgments* are sometimes joined together, as signifying the same Thing. How unsearchable are *his Judgments*, and *his Ways* past finding out, Rom. II. 33.

And now his *Ways*, or Manner of Government, may well be call'd his *Judgments*, because they are all agreeable to his Judgment, agreeable to what he Judges and knows to be just and right. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect, for all HIS WAYS are JUDGMENT*, Deut. 32. 4.

So that taking it in this Sense, and the Prayer of the Petition is, That GOD would give the King to see, to understand, and to go into the divine Ways of Government; that he might see and observe the Way of GOD in governing his Creatures, and might take his Measures from thence: That he might take not only the divine

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Law for his Rule ; but the divine Proceedings for his Pattern. It is a Prayer that the King might be sensible of the Wisdom and Justice of all the divine Proceedings, and that he might so far as he was capable, imitate the Example.

And now in this Sense it is a Prayer highly proper to be made by and for all civil Rulers. For surely, *Since the Powers that be, are ordained of GOD* ; since Rulers are GOD's Deputies & Vicegerents ; since they are dignified with the Name and Title of *Gods* † ; and since *the Kingdom is the Lords, and he is Governour among the Nations* ; and by and under him it is that Kings Reign. &c. Surely it is highly reasonable that they should take all their Measures from him, and come as near to the perfect Pattern of Government that he has set them, as possible. What can we desire better for Rulers than that they should rule like GOD, with the Wisdom, Justice and Goodness that he rules over the Works of his Hands !

Rulers must not take Pattern by those that have gone before them in Government, any further than they act agreeable to the divine Law and the divine Method of Proceeding. — As for a great Part of those that have been in Authority, they have been either so imperious and tyrannical in their Government, or so careless & negligent of their respective Trusts, or so selfish and seeking their own Interests, that they are rather to be set up as *Marks* to avoid than as Examples to follow. And among those few Worthies that have ruled well, there have been such a Multitude of Errors and Failings in their Conduct, that it is with Discretion that they are to be imitated.

† Psal. 82. 6.

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But now GOD is a most perfect Pattern, every Thing in his Government is man ged with consummate Wisdom, with impartial Justice, with inviolable Truth, with infinite Clemency and Tenderness, and with a universal Care & Thot to every Thing in his providential Kingdom: That so much as a Sparrow can't fall to the Ground without the Cognizance and Influence of our heavenly Father, *Matth. 18. 29.*

Indeed we may not in all the Instances of the divine Government, be able to trace the Footsteps of Wisdom, and Goodness and Truth in them. But this is not because they are not really in them; but because of our Short-sightedness and the narrowness of our Thoughts. Many of the divine Ways are unsearchable as to us, and his Judgments are a great Deep. But altho' Clouds and thick Darkness are oftentimes round about Him; yet this we may be assured of, that Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne forever. — And when GOD shall give us a more large and comprehensive View of Things, and to see to the End of them, we shall be more fully convinced hereof — And now, How should Rulers, who rule with GOD, as well as under Him, endeavour to rule as he does? How should they pray to GOD that he would set his Justice, his Truth, his Goodness, his Wisdom so before them, that they may copy after his glorious Perfections? And how should every Character that is given of the divine Government endear the Divine Being to all Rulers and inspire them with an Ambition of doing likewise? They should pray that GOD would so set his Justice and Impartiality before them, as may put them upon acting with Justice and with all Impartiality

ality in all their Proceedings ; and that they may have such a View of him as a GOD of Truth and with whom it is impossible to ly, as may put them upon being true to their Words, true to their Promises, true and faithful in their respective Offices and Trusts, true to the Interests of the People, and to the publick Weal.—Moreover, They are to desire such a View of his Goodness and Tenderness to the Poor, the Afflicted and Distressed, as may influence them to shew Mercy and to afford Relief to all within the reach of their Power.— Finally, They should desire such a View of the divine Wisdom in all his Conduct, as may put them upon acting wisely & prudently in all their publick Affairs : That they may have the Heart of the Wise to discern both Time and Judgment ; that they may know when to frown and when to smile, when to punish and when to reward, when to straiten and when to slacken the Reins of Government : And in short, That as GOD does every Thing in the best and in the most proper Season, so that they may understand the Times & Seasons, and know what *Israel* ought to do at one Time and at another. In a Word, The Aim and Desire of all Rulers should be that they may be pure, as GOD who has called them is Pure, that they might be Just as GOD is Just, that they may be Merciful as GOD is Merciful, and Perfect as their heavenly Father is Perfect.

2: I come now to consider the second Petition in the Prayer, *And thy Righteousness to the King's Son.*

Now the Righteousness of GOD is an essential Attribute, which constantly inclines, and actually puts him upon being just and true in all his Ways:
It

It is so essential to the Divine Nature, that he can as well cease to be, as cease to be Righteous : It is that in GOD, whereby he can and will do Right, and can do no otherwise.

Accordingly the Prayer of this Petition is, *That GOD would give to the King an internal Principle of Righteousness, somewhat like the Principle which is in GOD himself.* It is a Prayer for a gracious Habit of Justice, Truth and Goodness, that may incline and dispose him constantly to Acts of Justice, even such a Principle as may influence him to a just, a wise and faithful Administration, how many and how strong Temptations soever he may meet with to the contrary.

The other Petition was, that GOD would give him his Statutes and his Judgments for the Rule of his Conduct, and give him such a View of his own Proceedings in Government, as that he may copy after it. But *this* may be considered as a Petition that GOD would give him his *Righteousness*, as a Principle, an inward Principle, to prompt and put him upon a Conduct agreeable thereunto. And this was a most necessary Petition ; for without such a Principle of Righteousness within, he would never conform to the Precepts or Pattern of GOD in Government.

Righteousness is a comprehensive Word in the Scripture Use of it, and oftentimes takes in the whole of Religion, even all that is due to GOD, to our Neighbour, or to our Selves : And hence the true Saint, the true Believer, goes by the Name of *the Righteous* ; and we may consider it in such a desirable Latitude in our Text. And truly where there is a real Principle of Righteousness, where GOD gives his Righteousness, it will

will be so extensive, and the Man will be a truly religious Man; he will deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and will live soberly and godly, as well as *righteously*: And he will be righteous not only from the native Excellency of it, but out of a regard to GOD and in Obedience to Him.

And now, What a necessary Prayer is this for Rulers in general? It is not sufficient for Rulers to have good Rules, or good Examples, for if they have not a Principle of Righteousness and Holiness reigning in their Hearts, they will deviate from the Rule, and neglect the Pattern tho' it be of GOD himself. But now, a Habit of Righteousness, a Principle of true Justice and Goodness will help them not only to understand the Rules of Justice in the Word of GOD, and to see the Wisdom and Justice of the Divine Conduct; but it will put them upon a careful Conformity thereto in their private Concerns, but more especially in their publick Administrations.

Without this Principle Rulers may do many Acts of Justice, may make very good and wholesome Laws; and may sometimes be faithful in the Execution of them; their Honour, their Interest may prompt them to it; but for want of such a Principle, they will not be steady to the Rule, but will be frequently warping, and twisting, and turning aside, as their present Humour or Interest leads them. So that where there is no Principle of *Righteousness* in the Heart, there can be no Dependence upon such a Ruler, for a constant, steady and unvariable Regard to Truth and Justice: He will be always liable to be turned aside by some private and selfish Views, that have the Ascendant in his Heart; and what Security can there be to the Common-Wealth?

But

But now, where there is a Principle, a gracious Principle of *Righteousness*, the *Righteousness* of GOD given and wrought in the Soul by his blessed Spirit, O what a happy Byass will it give the Ruler in all his publick Conduct ! Then his Aim will be to do the Thing that is just and right, according to the best of his Understanding. This Principle will prompt him to enact righteous Laws ; this will prompt him to judge righteous judgments, and to be faithful in every Trust. — Where there is such a Principle reigning in the Heart of a Ruler, he wont be carried away by any private sinister Views : He dont consider so much, how such a Law or Act will suit his own private Interest, but whether it be for the publick Weal ; not whether it will best serve his private Designs, but whether it be just and reasonable in it self. — And if he be concerned in the Execution of Laws, this Principle will carry him through : When he sets upon the Bench, this Principle will drive away all partial Favour, all fond Pity, and besure all Malice and Hatred, and will help him to distribute Justice with an equal Hand, imitating the great Judge of all, who is without respect of Persons.

So that there is nothing greater or better can be asked for Rulers than that GOD would give them *his Righteousness*. This is what they, as well as other Men, are naturally destitute of, and it is not of themselves, but is *the Gift of GOD* —

Some Men have indeed a kind of natural Honesty and Simplicity ; at least are not so much inclin'd to Dissimulation & Deceit as others. Some also have a moral Honesty, and both these are very necessary for Governours and Rulers : And indeed may be in such a Degree as to render Magistrates very useful in their Place, and Instruments of a great deal of Justice among a People.

But

But after all it is *GOD's Righteousness*, a gracious Principle implanted in the Soul by the Spirit of the living GOD, that is the universal Principle that will carry Men through in all the Acts of Justice ; that will put a Ruler upon shewing a Respect to every Commandment, at all Times, in all Places, in all Societies and upon all Occasions, let the Temptations to the contrary be never so strong.

Moreover, *This* is the only Principle that will put Rulers upon being faithful in their Places *from a due Regard to GOD*, and in Obedience to Him, and with any Thing of a single Eye to his Glory, without which, the best Services that Rulers do will not find Acceptance with GOD thro' CHRIST ; nor will GOD look upon any such Service as done unto him : For GOD will see that whatever Good they did, they did it for themselves, and not for Him ; to serve some private Interest of their own, and not to advance his Glory ; to gratify a selfish Spirit, and not from a generous Concern for the Good of others ; out of Love to themselves, and not to GOD.

And thus I have considered the *Prayer* in the Text, *Give to the King thy Judgments, O GOD, and thy Righteousness unto the King's Son.* And as it has now been opened, it appears to be a most excellent and comprehensive Prayer for Rulers : And to make this yet more evident, let us take a general View of a Ruler to whom GOD is pleased to grant *his Judgments* and *his Righteousness*.

And now, He is one that is well instructed in the Law of his GOD, for he has studied it ; and like the royal Psalmist, *He delights in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night ;*

Night; he learns his Rules of Justice, and his Maxims of Truth and Wisdom, not so much from the Heathen Moralists, or Civilians, as from the Oracles of GOD. He will indeed read their Writings. and acquaint himself with the Laws and Constitutions of Men, and will learn many excellent Things by them; but he will see the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, of *Christ* and his Apostles go vastly beyond them, not only as to extent of the Rules laid down, but also for the Foundation that moral Duties are put upon, and the Principle from whence the Obedience must flow: And he will go into no Policies, but what are warranted by the Word of GOD: He takes his Measures of Government from the divine Methods and not from the Manners of the World, and he follows the Way of Mankind no further than he sees them following the divine Pattern.

Moreover, He has a gracious Principle of Justice that goes thro' all his Administrations. He has the Righteousness of GOD in his Heart that constantly puts him upon conforming to the divine Will, and to imitate the divine Pattern: He has such a Principle of Truth and Justice, that he hates every Evil and every false Way; and scorns and despises every Thing that is base, mean or little: His Soul is fill'd with a generous Concern for the publick Good, like the great GOD whose tender Mercies are over all his Works.

He accepts of Places of publick Trust & Service not meerly for the Honour or the Profit of them, but that he may have Opportunity of doing the greater Good: He may indeed have a View to his private Interest, to the Support and Benefit of his Family, but then he always subjects his private Interest to the publick Good: And accordingly will have an Eye to the Publick, in all his Schemes

and Projects; the governing Thought will not be how he may make an Advantage to himself, but how the Publick may be benefited.

Moreover, From the same Principle of Righteousness he will be very Impartial in all his Administrations: He wont be bribed by Interest, nor blinded by Favour and Friendship, nor will he be moved by Neglects, Affronts or Injuries, to swerve from the Rule of Justice and Goodness.

Moreover, This Principle goes with him into every Part of Government. Does he belong to the *legislative Body*, and is he concerned in making Laws; the Inquiry with him will not be whether this or the other Law will serve his private Interest, but whether it will be for the publick Good, and the latter sways and determines the Matter with Him. — Or does he set in the Place of Judgment, he will endeavour to hear and judge impartially; he will not hear the Rich out of Favour, or the Poor out of Pity, he will utterly shake his Hands of Bribes, and be very cautious of every Thing that appears like it or approaches towards it, or that tends to give him a Byass; but will endeavour to be like GOD, *with whom there is no Iniquity, nor respect of Persons, nor taking of Gifts*, 2 Chr. 19. 7. So in the Execution of Laws upon Offenders, he will act as a Minister of GOD, a Revenger to Execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil, and his Eye will not spare, neither will he have Pity; knowing that Pity and Tenderneſs to them, may be Cruelty to others; and whilst he takes Care to be a Terror to evil Doers, he praises and encourages them that do well.

Again, Is he concerned in nominating, appointing or electing others into Offices of Trust and Service, the Righteousness of GOD that is in him will direct and influence him to eye the Faithful
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in the Land, even the most proper and best qualified Persons. The Inquiry of such a Ruler will be who is fit or fittest for the Post, and not who will serve my Interest best; or what Friend have I to oblige in this Matter? There is no doubt but (*ceteris paribus*) a Friend may be preferred to a Stranger; but considering the Danger that every Man is in of being prejudiced in his own Favour, the truly righteous Man will be very jealous of himself, and will be ready with the heathen Ruler, when advanc'd to Government, to take leave of his Friends; and with Levi, † to say unto his Father, and to his Mother, *I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his Brethren, nor know his own Children*, when they come in Competition with the publick Weal: For the Ruler that has GOD's Judgments and his Righteousness, will be greater Friend to GOD, to Justice, and to the publick Good, than to the dearest Relation upon Earth.

Finally, He exhibits a bright Example of Piety, Justice and Charity to all about him. He manifests the highest Regards to the divine Laws, by a uniform Obedience unto them; and subjects himself to the same Laws of Man, that he would govern others by; and wont require Obedience from others to any Laws that he don't observe himself: By his Conduct he becomes a living Law; and teaches and leads People to regular & peaceable living by his Example, as much as by his Authority. This is the King, the Governour, the Counsellor and the Judge, to whom GOD gives his Judgments and his Righteousness.

II. I proceed now to consider the next Thing contained in the Text, *viz. The Argument plea-*

† Deut 33. 9.

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ded with GOD to prevail with him to give his Judgments and his Righteousness unto the King ; He shall judge thy People with Righteousness, and thy Poor with Judgment. The meaning of which in general is, That if GOD would but give his Judgments and his Righteousness to the King, then the King would have a special Regard to the Lord's People, and would proceed with Wisdom, Justice and Goodness in all his Administrations of Government among them.

When Rulers pray for themselves, or when others pray for them, they should humbly argue and plead the Matter with GOD in their Prayers. And there is no better Argument we can use with GOD, next to that of his own Glory, than the Benefit that his own People, his own poor People especially will receive by wise and good Rulers being bestowed upon them. Nothing better to plead with GOD to give his Judgments and Righteousness to Kings and Governours, and all in subordinate Authority, than that by this Means his People, his Covenant People, and the Poor among them shall have Justice and Judgment done them, which they oftentimes suffer for want of, under unjust Rulers.

The great GOD has always manifested a very tender regard for his own People, and especially for the Poor and Oppressed among them. He undertakes to be a *Refuge for the Oppressed, to plead the Cause of the Widow, and the Fatherless find Mercy with Him.* And he has declared, that he will be a *swift Witness against those that Oppress the Hireling in his Wages, the Widow and the Fatherless, and that turn aside the Stranger from his Right,* Mal. 3. 5.

So that we may conclude that there are no Cries that will more freely enter into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, than those of the Oppressed, and consequently no Argument we can use that will be more prevalent with GOD, for giving his Judgments, and his Righteousness to Rulers, than that this is the Way for his poor, oppressed People to have Judgment and Justice executed for them.

It is the Will of GOD that his People should be judged with Righteousness, and his Poor with Judgment, for the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, and his Countenance doth behold the Upright, † And to do Justice and Judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice ‖, The grand Motive with Rulers to ask, and with others to ask for them, to have GOD's Judgments and Righteousness should be that they might be able to judge wisely & uprightly: And if this Argument proceeds from Men's Hearts, they cannot use a more acceptable nor a more prevalent Plea with GOD. Solomon made use of this very Plea in his Prayer when he first came to the Throne; and oh how it pleased the Lord! and how abundantly was his Prayer answered! Give thy Servant an understanding Heart, to judge thy People that I may discern between good and bad: And the Speech pleased the Lord, that he had ask'd this Thing; and God said unto him, because thou hast asked this Thing, and hast not asked for thy self long Life, neither hast asked Riches for thy self; nor hast asked the Life of thine Enemies, but hast asked for thy self Understanding to discern Judgment; behold I have done according to thy Word; so I have given thee a wise and an understanding Heart, &c. *

† Psal. 11. 7. ‖ Prov. 21. 3. * 1 Kings 3. 9. — 12.

And oh what a happy State is a Government in, when GOD thus gives to their Rulers a wise and an understanding Heart to discern both Time and Judgment ! When they are so under the Guidance of GOD's Law, the Influence of his Example, and the Power of his Spirit and Grace, as to proceed in all their Administrations in a wise and prudent manner, with a sacred and inviolable Regard to Justice & Truth, dispensing it impartially to all, and at the same Time have a special tender Regard *to the Poor, and him that hath no Helper* ! How happy for a People when their Rulers take effectual Care by their Laws, by their Example and by their Authority, that no Injustice be done ; that People may recover, and may be preserved in the quiet and peaceable Possession of their just Rights and Properties ; and that as much as in them lyes, People may be kept from defrauding, over-reaching, oppressing or injuring one another : When they eyeing the divine Law, enact such as are just and righteous in themselves, and then see to the faithful and impartial Execution of them ! How happy for a People, when the Golden Rule of Justice of *doing to other as we would they should do to us*, obtains among Rulers ; and when all is done in Obedience to the great GOD, with an Eye to his Glory, and under a lively Sense of their being acceptable to him.

And now all this depends upon GOD's giving his *Judgments* and his *Righteousness* to Rulers. Oh then, What powerful Arguments are these to use with GOD in our humble fervent Addresses for those that he Places in Authority ! How effectual must such Prayers and Pleadings be with GOD : And if a People have not sin'd away the Grace of GOD, they will avail much with Him. These Prayers, if they proceed from unfeigned Lips, will
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be agreeable to the Will of GOD : *And this is the Confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any Thing according to His Will, he beareth us, 1 Joh. 5. 14.*

III. I proceed now to consider another Argument pleaded with GOD for the giving his Judgments and his Righteousness to the King; taken from the happy Influence it would have upon the State and Circumstances of the People in general, in promoting their Peace, Happiness and Prosperity : *The Mountains shall bring Peace to the People, and the little Hills by Righteousness.* That is, When GOD gives the King his Judgments and his Righteousness, and when he judges the People accordingly with Righteousness and Judgment, then the Mountains and little Hills will bring Peace to the People ; so that the Peace and Happiness of a People depends upon it : And a very good Argument it is to be used with GOD, to move Him to shew such Favour to his People. And it is a very good Argument to quicken our Prayers : For every Ruler & every private Man that has a regard for the publick Weal and Prosperity, will be moved from hence to plead with GOD for so comprehensive a Blessing : *For my Brethren and Companions sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee,* is the Language and Spirit of a true Patriot : He will pray for the Peace & Prosperity of his Nation & Country ; and as the only Way to this, will pray for GOD's Judgments and Righteousness to the King, to the Governour and all in Authority.

There are two Senses put upon this last Verse in the Text, which I shall briefly take Notice of ;

I. A very learned Expositor || understands *Mountains and Hills* in a metaphorical Sense, as signifying

|| Dr. HAMMOND, in loc.

Rulers

Rulers of an higher and lower Order; and supposes that what is particularly intended here, is they higher and lower Courts of Judicature; and that they will bring Peace and Righteousness to the People, by their wise, regular and impartial Administration; and this is what would follow upon the former; for GOD's giving his Judgments, and his Righteousness to the King, will direct and dispose him to fill every Office whether higher or lower, with Persons well qualified therefor. This will prompt the supreme Ruler to look out for the fittest Men to sustain any Part of Government; Then he will according to the divine Direction provide able Men, Men of Understanding, equal to their Office, and such as Fear GOD, Men of Truth, bating Covetousness: Then every Chair of Honour and Service through the Kingdom, would be filled with Men of Knowledge, Wisdom and Integrity, and these by their wise, prudent and faithful Conduct in their higher or lower Stations, will bring great Peace to the People of GOD.

And this may be considered as a further Plea with GOD, That he would give his Judgments to the King, because then all the inferiour & subordinate Offices of his Kingdom will be filled up with such wise and good Men as will bring Peace and Righteousness to the People, as some would have it; or Peace by Righteousness, as our Translation has it. The Peace & Prosperity of a People depends not only upon a wise and good King; but upon wise and good Officers under him.

And now, touching *this Sense* of the Words, it may be said, That *Mountains* and *little Hills* are very apt Similitudes to represent *superiour* and *inferiour* Officers by. There are Mountains and little Hills in the *political* as well as in the *natural* World; and they add as much to the Beauty, and
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are of equal Use and Necessity in the former as in the latter.

Some that are Ignorant and short-sighted as to the natural Causes of Things, have been ready to Fancy that the Globe in which we live would be more beautiful and agreeable, if the Superficies of it was perfectly smooth and plain, and that the Hills and Mountains are so many Deformities and Imperfections in it.

And others of as short, and shallow a Thought, have been ready to think so with respect to Government, and as if a perfect Level among Men would be the more happy State.

But as the great Creator of the World, in his infinite Wisdom, raised up Hills and Mountains upon the Earth, to answer many good and excellent Uses ; so has He with the same Wisdom, and for as many good Purposes, advanced some of the Children of Men above the common Level : Some he sets in superiour Stations, like *great Mountains*, others in lower Places like the *little Hills*.

And now, if GOD is pleased to give his Judgments and his Righteousness to the King, or to the Authority that has the disposal of Places in their Hands ; the happy Effect of it will be that every Place will be filled with good Men, who by their wise, and faithful Administration will prevent or suppress Tumults, Quarrels and Jarrs among the People, and maintain Peace and good Order among them ; then there will not be that Error proceeding from the chief Ruler that *Solomon* speaks of, *viz. Folly set in great Dignity*, Eccl. 10. 6. Then there will not be that unhappy State among a People that the Psalmist speaks of, that *the Wicked walk on every Side, because the vilest Men, or vilest of the Sons of Men, are exalted*, Psal. 12. 8.

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But the Language, the Resolution and Care of these Kings and Governours, under the divine and gracious Influence will be like the royal Psalmist, who would not *know a wicked Person, and would cut off him that privily slandereth his Neighbour, and would not bear such as had an high Look, and a proud Heart ; but his Eyes were upon the Faithful of the Land, and such as walked in a perfect Way to dwell with him and to serve him,* Psal. 101. 4, 5, 6.

Let but the King, the Governour, and those that have it in the power of their Hands, to dispose of subordinate Offices, have GOD's Judgments and his Righteousness, and act according to the divine Direction, the wisest, the ablest and the best Men in the Kingdom, in the Province, will be sought for, and promoted to Places of Honour and Trust, who will manage wisely, and prudently and peaceably, so as to have no Envyings, no Janglings, nor Quarrellings among themselves. *Envy, says the Preacher, is Rottenness of the Bones,* Prov. 14 30. Which some have applyed to Rulers, who are the Bones of the Body Politick, by which it is supported, and Envyng among them is as Rottenness to the Bones ; and at length will destroy these Props of humane Society : But a wise and good King or Governour will take Care that Men of better Tempers, of more generous Principles, be set in Dignity and Power, that will know their own Place, & keep within their own Sphere: So that the *Mountains* or higher Officers won't be for bearing down, or crushing the *little Hills*, or lesser Ones ; nor will the *little Hills* be for swelling up into *Mountains*, nor for exercising themselves in Things too high for them ; but all content with the Places that GOD and the King has put them in, conspire to bring forth Righteousness, Peace and Truth to the People. Happy
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the People that is in such a Case ! And oh how powerful and prevalent the Plea with GOD, that He would give his *Judgments* and his *Righteousness* to the King, the Governour, and all that have the disposal of lower Offices in their Hands !

2. But then by *Peace* here may be intended, *All Kind of Prosperity in general* ; and the *Mountains* and the *little Hills bringing it forth* intends GOD's prospering and blessing them upon *all Accounts* : That not only the fat Valleys shall bring forth Abundance ; but the dry little Hills, yea the great and barren Mountains shall bring Plenty and Prosperity unto them. And so it is understood of GOD's prospering and blessing them with Peace and all Kinds of Plenty in an uncommon Degree. And this is what shall follow upon the former, for truly a People are never in a more likely Way for the Blessings of Heaven to flow in upon them, than when they have wise and good Rulers among them, who judge the People with *Righteousness*, and the Poor with *Judgment* : For good Rulers make a good People, and a good People are in the Way of good Things.

The Wisdom, the Justice, the Goodness, the Care and Faithfulness of Rulers, of higher & lower Degree, tend to suppress Disorders, and to correct the Manners of People ; they tend to make them just and honest, sober and temperate, diligent and faithful in their Business ; and will serve to suppress Jealousies, and Discontents, and stop all Clamours among People. It will influence them to honour all in Power, and to yield a more cheerful and ready Subjection to their Authority, and will put them upon *leading quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty*. And these are great Blessings in themselves.

But besides These, good Rulers bring a People into the Way of all the Blessings of divine Providence. GOD will take Delight in such a People, and he will cause what they do to prosper. He will give them Peace in their Borders, and Health in their Habitations, and will crown the Years that pass over them with his Goodness; He will give them the former and the latter Rain in their Season, and he will cause the Earth to yield it's Increase; and GOD even their own GOD will bless them. He will redeem them out of all their Troubles, He will extricate them out of all their Difficulties:—*The good Will of him that dwelt in the Bush will be with such a People, and he will give them the precious Things of Heaven, and those that are beneath; the precious Fruits brought forth by the Sun, and the precious Things put forth by the Moon, and the chief Things of the ancient Mountains, and the precious Things of the lasting Hills, and the precious Things of the Earth, and the fulness thereof, Deut. 33. 13, to 16.* Thus would such a People be distinguished from all others by the Favour of Divine Providence, even to the Admiration of all that observe it, and they will be ready to say, *Happy art thou O People, who is like unto thee, O People, saved by the Lord, who is the Shield of thy Help, and who is the Sword of thy Excellency, Deut. 33. 28, 9.*

IMPROVEMENT.

1. From what we have heard, we learn how much Rulers depend upon GOD to qualify them for their respective Offices.

It is by the over-ruling Providence of GOD that this and the other Man is distinguished from his Fellow-Creatures, & set in Authority over them. For he giveth Kingdoms and Governments, and so every

every Inferiour Office to whomsoever he pleases : But then GOD is to be acknowledged not only in the putting Men into Places of Dignity and Authority, but in all the good Qualifications they have for their respective Offices. He gives them not only their natural Powers ; but all their special and peculiar Accomplishments for Government ; and especially that which compleats their Character, *viz.* His Judgments and his Righteousness : He must give his Judgments & his Righteousness to a King to make him a good King ; to a Governour, to make him a good Governour ; to Judges, Counsellors, and every other Officer, to make them wise, just, diligent and faithful in their respective Offices, and so Blessings to the People over whom they are placed. *For Wisdom and Might are his : He changeth the Times & Seasons, he removeth Kings, and setteth up Kings ; he giveth Wisdom to the Wise, and Knowledge to them that know Understanding, Dan. 2. 20, 21.*

2. Here is a Rule by which we may judge of Rulers, whether they be Good or no, *viz.* Their having or not having GOD's Judgments and his Righteousness.

Whatever other Accomplishments a Man may have ; yet without these he will fall short of the Character of a good Ruler ; and neither of these separate will answer the End. A Man may have GOD's Judgments, may be well acquainted with the divine Oracles, may be well able to discourse most learnedly and judiciously upon the Law and Gospel ; but this will by no means make him a good Ruler, unless there be GOD's Righteousness also ; that is, a Principle of Righteousness in the Heart : Without this there can be no Dependence upon such a Ruler for a faithful, steady and impartial Management ; but for want of this Principle he

he will be liable to be warped by selfish Views; from the Rules of Justice; and his Knowledge will only help him to some Distinctions that may quiet his Conscience for the present. So on the other hand, A Man's having GOD's *Righteousness*, a Principle of Justice and Righteousness, wont of it self fit him for a Ruler; he must also be understanding in the Law of GOD, the Laws of Justice, Truth & Goodness, to direct that honest Principle within. So that there must be Knowledge as well as Honesty to make a good Ruler; and it is only where these two unite, that we can depend upon a wise, a steady and impartial Administration.

But then the Question is, How we shall know whether Men have these Qualifications for Government; whether they have this Principle of GOD's *Righteousness* more especially? And my Text furnishes us with an Answer, *viz*, From the Effects of such a Principle:

So then,

3. We learn, that *the way to judge concerning Rulers is by their Administrations.*

When GOD gives the King his Judgments, and his Righteousness, then the King will *Judge the People with Righteousness, and the Poor with Judgment.* This then is the Rule for Men to judge by. It is in vain for them to pretend, or others to plead for them, that they have GOD's Judgments and Righteousness; in vain to talk of their Justice, their Goodness and their Religion, when they are not just in their Administration of Government: *Let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous, 1 Joh. 3. 7.*

I acknowledge indeed that the common People are not always able to judge what is just and righteous in a publick Administration, and are very often carried away with popular Cries
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of Injustice and Oppression, when there is the strictest Justice, and the greatest Tenderness to the Publick.

And there are *Arcana Imperii*, *Secrets of State*, that none but such as are concerned in them are supposed capable, fully to judge about: But yet in general, Justice and Righteousness is a Self-evident Thing, and every One can feel when he is oppressed and injured, or done justly by. And therefore altho' the Ignorance of People should make them very cautious so much as of entertaining hard Thoughts of their Rulers, much more of speaking Evil of them; yet after all, it is by the Manner of their Administration that they must regulate their Thoughts of them. Their great Knowledge, their high Profession of Religion wont signify without an impartial Administration.

4. We learn *what a sad Presage it is to a People when such Rulers abound, to whom GOD has not given his Judgments and his Righteousness.*—When Rulers despise the divine Law, when they have no Principle of Justice, Truth or Mercy to govern them, but are govern'd by worldly Maxims, by private Interests, and selfish Views; what can be expected for such a People, but Ruin & Misery.—Surely there dont need a Spirit of Prophecy to tell that then *Judgment will be turned away backward, and Justice will stand afar off, that Truth will fall in the Streets, and Equity will not be able to enter* †. Nor that then you will see *the Tears*, and hear the *Groans of the Oppressed*, but there is no Comforter, no Helper, Power being *on the Side of the Oppressor* *. *As a roaring Lion, and a ranging Bear, so is a wicked Ruler over a poor People.* ||

† Isa. 59. 14. * Eccl. 4: 1. || Prov. 28. 15.

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5. *What a Token for Good is it, with Thankfulness to be acknowledged by a People, when GOD gives his Judgments and his Righteousness to such as he sets in Authority over them?*

When the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoice, Prov. 29. 2. Civil Government is absolutely necessary for humane Societies; and wise & good Rulers are some of the greatest Blessings for a People; and as we should pray for such, so whenever GOD favours a People with such, they are under all possible Obligations for Praise and Thanksgiving. GOD is to be seen and acknowledged in this as well as in every other Mercy; nay This is comprehensive of a Multitude of Mercies, and is a Token of the divine Favour to a People whenever he bestows it upon them. *Because thy GOD loved Israel to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee King over them to do Judgment and Justice.* 2 Chron. 9. 8.

6. *Here is a Rule for such to go by as are concern'd in choosing and appointing Officers and Rulers among a People.*

Surely they must have a special Eye to their having GOD's Judgments and his Righteousness, to their being instructed in Religion, and also to their having a Principle of Religion, that animates and governs them in all their Views, and in all their Conduct. This will be the Case of all to whom GOD gives his Judgments and his Righteousness.

But here you must take Care that you don't Mistake as to Men's being Men of Religion. if you Mistake about Religion it self; if you should place it in *Enthusiasm*, in *Raptures*, *Extasies*, and immediate *Impulses of the Spirit*, without any Use of regular Judgment; or if you place it in a Zeal for

for non-essential Doctrines, or in a Zeal for meer Circumstantials of Religion, you would make egregious Mistakes indeed in the Choice or Appointment of Rulers.

But the Men you are to look upon as religious, and fit for any Share in the Government, are such who pay the highest Regard to the *divine Oracles*, that make them the Man of their Counsel and the Rule & Measure of all their Conduct; and that instead of placing their Religion, in the *tything of Mint, Annise and Cummin* evidently shew the highest Regards to the *weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, Faith and the Love of GOD.*† These are the Men to be prefer'd above all others; These are the Men to be depended upon, and from whom we may expect a wise & just Management of our Affairs.

7. We learn whence it is that *there are ever Failures in Government; both of the Wisdom and Justice that ought to be in it, namely, A want of that thorough Acquaintance with the Laws and Rules of Justice; and a want of that internal Principle of Righteousness, which there ought to be in Rulers.*

Many of our Rulers have from the Beginning been Men of Justice and Wisdom, that have had the Knowledge and the Principle; but there is Reason to fear this has not been the Case of all.

It is to be feared that some former Assemblies have not in all Respects govern'd themselves by those Precepts and Principles; if they had, I cannot think we should have been so involved, as now we are. *GOD forbid, That I should be guilty of rash judging.* But who can think if there had been nothing of a Party-Spirit, or of a Spirit of Pride and of Opposition, nothing of a selfish and a contracted Spirit, that the Province would

† Matth. 23. 23.

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have been so perplexed, as that now it seems to be beyond any common Skill to extricate it.

That *Honesty is the best Policy* is as true as it is a common saying, and is abundantly supported by the Oracles of Truth : *The Righteousness of the Upright shall deliver them, but Transgressors shall be taken in their own Naughtiness*, Prov. 11. 6. The righteous Lord, I fear, has been provoked with the Corruptions that he has seen in our General Courts, and so has withheld Wisdom from the Wise, and scattered Darkness in their Paths, and left many Marks of his Displeasure upon us. The unsteady Conduct about our *Medium*, shews that there has wanted not only Wisdom, but Truth and Justice. For if their had been that Uprightness, and such a disinterested Regard to the publick Good as there should have been ; I can't think that Things would have come to this unhappy pass. The Integrity of the Upright would have guided them into better Measures, than to send forth a Medium with such a *depreciating Tendency* in it ; that instead of its being a fixed steady Medium of commutative Justice, it has been, for many Years, the grand Medium of Injustice among us, and rendered Justice between Man and Man almost impracticable.

8. Hence such as are in Authority ought to manage with that Wisdom and Justice, in all their Administrations, as to make it evident that GOD has of a Truth given his Judgments, and his Righteousness unto them.

Every Man should be honoured in the Station that divine Providence has plac'd him in. And nothing serves so naturally and powerfully to attract the Esteem and Honour of a People, as to see Men well furnished for their Posts ; endow'd with Knowledge, Wisdom, and Grace equal to the

the Trust reposed in them, and acting up to the Dignity and Design of their respective Offices, discharging every Duty with Wisdom and Fidelity; *this, this* will make the Rulers *Face to shine* before the People, as did the Face of *Moses* when he had been receiving the lively Oracles of GOD for guiding and governing his People *Israel*:

Surely then it concerns Rulers to honour themselves, and their respective Offices if they would be honoured in them. And for want of this it is that Government is oftentimes run upon, and brought into Contempt, and looked upon as a heavy Burden rather than a real Benefit. Whereas let such as are in Authority take all their Measures from the divine Law, and act from Principles of Truth and Justice, with a disinterested View to the publick Weal, they will plainly appear to be, as they are called, *Benefactors*, † and the *Ministers of GOD for Good*, ‥ and the People will reverence them accordingly.

Whereas such as seek for Places of Honour or Profit, without a due Concern to be fitted for them; that never consult the divine Oracles as their Guide, nor go to GOD for Wisdom and Grace to discharge aright, and are accordingly unskillful and unfaithful, and take no further Care than to secure the Honours and the Profits of their Places, these bring Authority into Contempt, bring Disgrace upon Rulers, and fill the People with Jealousies not only of *them* in particular, but even of all in Government; by which they grow regardless of the Laws, and Vice and Wickedness will naturally get Head upon it.

So that it is of the highest Importance for Rulers to act up to the Dignity of their Station, and answer the good Designs thereof; and for want

† Luke 22. 25. ‥ Rom. 13. 4.

of this it is very much that there are so many Despisers of Government. They are indeed called *filthy Dreamers, who despise Dominion, and speak Evil of Dignities* *, and GOD will reckon with them for it. But how much better, I beseech you, are Rulers if they by their weak, imprudent and unsteady Conduct render it contemptible, and by their corrupt and oppressive Ways give just occasion to speak Evil of them?

But it is high Time for me to come to a more particular Application.

And I would in the *first Place, with all dutiful Respect, address my self unto your EXCELLENCY*, whom GOD in his wise, sovereign, and gracious Providence has advanced to the chief Seat of Government over us.

And as your EXCELLENCY, with the Council, has ordered me into the Desk this Day, I entreat you would of your Clemency, bear me a few Words.

GOD is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another †, he changeth the Times and Seasons, he removeth Kings, and setteth up Kings || and Governours just as he pleases.

And upon this first so publick Occasion, I wou'd congratulate your Excellency upon the Honour that GOD and the King have done you, in setting you at the Head of so considerable a Province, and we hope and trust it is done in Favour to this People.

GOVERNMENT always has its Difficulties, and Honour is not without its Burdens. The publick Affairs of this Province are greatly perplexed. We pray and hope in GOD that your Excellency is raised up, to be the happy Instrument of lead-

* Jude 8. † Psal. 75. 7. || Dan. 2. 21.

ing this People out of the *Labyrinths* they have run into:

Your great *Acquaintance* with *humane Laws* and *Policies* in general, and with our *Constitution* in particular, as also with the present *State* and Condition of the Province, gives you peculiar Advantages for steering our publick Affairs with a skillful Hand, at such a dark and difficult Time as this is.

And the *Equanimity* & *Moderation* of your Temper, and the *Wisdom*, *Prudence* and *Steadiness* of your Conduct, in a more private Station, fill us with Hopes that the Publick will now receive the Benefit of those excellent & amiable Vertues:

But your *Acquaintance* with the *DIVINE LAWS*, and taking your Measures of Government from the *GRAND LEGISLATOR* and *SUPREME GOVERNOUR* of the World, (all whole Ways are *Judgment*) is what we chiefly rely upon for a wise, a just, and happy Administration.

We expect and as becomes the loyal Subjects of our *GRACIOUS KING*, desire that all the *Royal Prerogatives* may be supported and secured.

At the same Time we trust your *Excellency* will be very tender of all the just *Rights* and *Privileges* of this People, granted to them by the *ROYAL CHARTER*, and if I may so say, purchased with a great deal of *Hardship*, *Blood* and *Treasure*. And if the chief Captain, when he understood *Paul* was a *Roman* treated him with the greater Caution considering with how great a Price he himself obtained that Freedom and Liberty †, it will not be wonder'd at if this People should be very Choice of their *Privileges* and *Liberties*. May it please your *EXCELLENCY*, It is with a great Sum that our *Fathers* obtained this Freedom. Many great Estates

† Acts 22. 28.

were spent in transplanting the Inhabitants, and settling them in these distant Colonies, and in defending themselves from their Enemies, without the least Charge to the Crown; even when some other Provinces are a great Charge to his Majesty every Year. So that we cannot but look upon our selves as having a just Claim to all our *CHARTER Privileges*; and your *Excellency* will not wonder if we should be so tender of them as that the touching of them will be like *touching the Apple of the Eye*.

As to the *Constitution* of these Churches, which are *Congregational*, we are sensible your *Excellency* is not with us. But considering that the grand Motive with our Fathers of transplanting themselves and their Families into this then howling Wilderness, and undergoing such Hardships and Difficulties as they did, was that they might enjoy the pure Truths of GOD's Word, and worship him with the Purity and Simplicity, which *they* and *we their Children* look upon to be the Mind of Christ in his Gospel, we cannot but promise our selves that your *Excellency* will protect and defend all our *Ecclesiastical Rights and Privileges*, and that you will always interpose with your Wisdom and Goodness to prevent any unhappy Separations or Divisions among us.

And as your *Excellency* by happy Experience knows the great Advantage of *good Education and Learning*, so we promise our selves that you will shew a most tender Regard to the COLLEGE, which is the *Darling* of the Country, and which has afforded such a rich Supply to Church and State.

We are sensible there is a great deal of Power lodged with your *Excellency* in the *nominating and appointing Civil Officers*, with the Consent of the Council: And that the appointing *Military Officers* is wholly

wholly with the CAPTAIN GENERAL and COMMANDER IN CHIEF.

And your Excellency is sensible, that there is nothing wherein the Peace and Happiness of a People does more depend, than upon their having wise and good Men in every Office. For the subordinate Officers in a Government are *they*, which like the Mountains and the little Hills, bring Peace and Righteousness to the People. We hope therefore your Excellency, with the royal Psalmist, will always have your Eye upon the Faithful of the Land, and that like a true Citizen of Zion, every vile Person shall be contemned in your Eyes, whilst you Honour them that fear the Lord.—As you rule with GOD, and under Him, and are accountable to Him, so we trust you will nominate and appoint none to any Office, but whom you think GOD himself approves of; none but such as appear in the Judgment of Charity, the Friends of GOD, and of Religion; none but such as understand the Law of Justice and Goodness, and appear to have a Principle of Righteousness that sways and governs them; none but such as are qualified for their respective Posts, & equal to the Business that shall be assign'd to them.—That is a most full and perfect Rule to go by, given to Moses, *Exod. 18. 21.* provide out of all the People able Men, such as fear GOD, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness.

We look upon your Excellency as the Father of this Province, and trust that as a true Patriot you will seek the Good of this People in every Respect. Esteeming “all the Goodness there is in Power, to be a Power to do Good”. And that you will accordingly improve all your Power, Interest and Influence at Home, as well as among our Selves, for the real Good of this People, seeking their Wealth and Prosperity upon all Accounts, governing your
self

self by that generous Maxim fit for Kings and Governours, *Ditare magis est regium quam ditescere.* And we hope that the Hearts of this People will be suitably enlarg'd towards you, that they will consider you as GOD's Minister attending on this very Thing, and that they will afford you a Support suited to the *Expensiveness*, as well as the *Dignity* and *Importance* of your Station.

We heartily wish your *Excellency* the divine Presence, in all your Administrations. We cannot ask any thing better, than that GOD would give *his Judgments*, and *his Righteousness*, yet more and more abundantly unto you; that you may take all your Measures of Government from the divine Law, which is perfect, and may Copy after his Example who is *just and true* in all his Ways, and that you may be directed and assisted to all, by *his Spirit*. Then you will judge the People with *Righteousness*, and the Poor with *Judgment*. And at the Close of your Government, and of your Life, you will be able with great Satisfaction of Mind, to challenge this whole People, as *Samuel* did, and say, *Behold, Here I am, witness against me before the Lord, whose Ox have I taken, or whose Ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded, whom have I oppressed, or of whose Hand have I received any Bribe, to blind mine Eyes therewith?* * Nay, then you will be able with that good King *Hezekiah*, to appeal to the omniscient GOD himself, and say, *Remember O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is Good in thy Sight* ||. And may confidently plead with GOD as that good Governour did, † *Think upon me, my GOD, for Good, according to all that I have done for this People.* And when the small and great shall stand before GOD to be judged out of that

* 1 Sam. 12. 3. || 2 Kings 20. 3. † Neh. 5. 19.

Book, according to which you are to rule, and we to obey, you will receive the blessed *Eug*, and be admitted into everlasting Joy.

In the next Place, I would with all due Respect, but with the Faithfulness that becomes a *Minister of Jesus Christ*, and a *Messenger of the Lord of hosts*, address my self to the Honourable His MAJESTY'S COUNCIL, and the Honourable the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, this Day in GENERAL COURT assembled.

Thro' the Riches of Divine Goodness and Forbearance this Anniversary for the Election of His MAJESTY'S COUNCIL, for this PROVINCE is revolv'd upon us, *the Day of the Gladness of our Hearts*. And GOD in his wise and sovereign Providence has committed this important Trust into *Your Hands*. And as it is one of the greatest *Priviledges* that is reserved to us in the present ROYAL CHARTER; and as the Peace and Prosperity of *the State*, of *our Churches*, and of *the College* greatly depend upon the Wisdom, the Fidelity, and Steadiness of the *Council*; surely the Election of this Day ought to be managed with the utmost Care.

GENTLEMEN, This is not an Affair to be trifled with, nor is it to be managed rashly, ignorantly, or inconsiderately; nor are Persons to be chosen into this important Trust, thro' Favour or Affection; or in Complaisance, or to curry Favour with Superiours, or to carry on any particular private Design, or to serve any personal Interest. Nor are any to be rejected and laid aside, thro' Prejudice or Disaffection, or because they won't serve a particular Turn.

You must remember that you act here not for your selves, but for the WHOLE PROVINCE, and therefore the Inquiry must not be, Who are of your Sentiments? Who are in your particular

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Scheme; or who will best answer your End, and serve your Interest? but who will serve the *Interest*, the *true Interest*, the *best Interest* of the People in general.

And because Men are exceeding apt to be prejudiced in their own Favour, and think those will best serve the Publick that will best serve their private Interest. Therefore, If you have any private Interest of your own to serve, you ought to be very jealous of your selves, least it should give you an unhappy Bias, in your Choice.

Gentlemen, The Eyes of *this whole Province* are upon you, depending upon you, to make a wise and a good *Election*. But more than this, The OMNISCIENT EYE OF GOD is upon you, to observe who every One of you *Vote* for this Day, and from what Principle, and with what View you shall give your Votes for this, and the other Person. And how would you answer to that GOD that *standeth in the Congregation of the Mighty, and judgeth among the Gods*; if private selfish Views should govern your Votes; or if you should throw them in, in a careless manner, without any regard to the Character of the Persons, or their Qualifications for such a Service.

It is your Duty, and if GOD has given you *his Judgments and his Righteousness* you will govern your selves by the divine Directory; and will put in a Vote for none but such whom you rationally think GOD will approve of. — And from what you have heard under the Text you may easily gather what sort of Persons your Eyes should be upon; and who they are GOD will be best pleas'd with. And surely, They are such as have *his Judgments and his Righteousness*. They are such as are acquainted with the Divine Rules of Truth and Justice, and with the Maxims of true Christian Policy (which are those of *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*) and that by their Conduct appear to

to be governed by a righteous, by a religious Principle.

I would not have you think that I look upon every honest Man, every good Christian, fit to sit at the Council Table, by no Means ! For surely, a very extensive Knowledge, a good Acquaintance with the World, with the Laws and Policies, the State & Condition of it : With the Constitution of the English Government, and especially with our own Constitution and Condition; is very necessary. Accordingly such able, wise, understanding Men among all the Tribes, in the several Counties and Towns are to be looked for.

But then, These are by no Means sufficient Qualifications of themselves, but you must look out further ; even for such who besides and above these Accomplishments, are acquainted with the divine Law, and that appear by their outward Conduct to have an inward Principle that will always dispose and incline them to act agreeable hereunto. For without this Principle of Justice and Truth; their Knowledge will be but Craft and Subtilty, which will be made use of to serve their own turn rather than promote the publick Weal.

Let me then *Gentlemen*, FOR GOD'S SAKE, and for the SAKE OF THIS PEOPLE, bespeak every Vote this Day; for Men of true Religion, as well as of Knowledge and Learning ; for Men of exemplary undissembled Piety, as well as of deep Policy : For such as have an established Character for Men of GOD, for good Christians ; and that have shew'd themselves to be so by a sober and temperate, by a just and peaceable, by a regular and blameless Behaviour ; as also by their shewing a proper regard to GOD's Word, his Day, his House, his Worship.

Let me bespeak your Votes for such as you have reason to think GOD will be pleased with ; that

GOD will own, that GOD will direct, assist and prosper in managing the publick Trust.

You all profess to be the *Friends of GOD*, and the *Friends of this People* : Surely then you will not, you dare not put in a Vote, for any one Man but what you think is on the Lord's Side, that is a Friend to Religion; and is apparently under the Influence of it; for these are the only Men with whom you can expect the divine Presence, the divine Conduct and the divine Blessing. As for others, You can expect nothing but that Darkness should be scattered in their Paths; and that they would be as so many treacherous *Abitbophels*, whose *Counsels* will be turned into *Foolishness*, 2 Sam. 15. 31.

Oh then, Take heed what you do, examine carefully every List you draw your selves, or that may be put into your Hands by others; and shew your selves to be the *Friends of GOD*, the *Friends of your Country*, *Friends of our Civil*, of our *Ecclesiastical* and *Academical Priviledges*, by sending in your Votes for such and only such as you can most confidently Trust, these our most valuable Interests with.

And when the important Affair of this Day, (which we pray GOD of his infinite Mercy to conduct and over-rule to his Glory and for the Good of this People) shall be over; and you shall proceed upon the publick Affairs of the Province, we hope you will act in such a manner as to make it evident that GOD, that his *Judgments* and his *Righteousness* are with you of a Truth.

You will make two Parts of the *Legislature*, and so will be concerned in making what Laws may be tho't further necessary for the regulating the Affairs of the Province. And now you must bring them all to the *Divine Law*, as the only *Standard*. I don't mean the *Ceremonial Law*; nor do I mean the

the *judicial Laws* of the Jews, any further than the Circumstances, & the reason of Things concur ; but I mean the MORAL LAW, that great Law of LOVE to G O D and to One another, that Law which was given to Man at first, and has gone thro' all the various Dispensations of Grace in the Church, and will abide forever : By this Law, I say, you must try every Order and Law of yours.

The *Grand Charter* which the Sovereign of the World has given to Magistrates, impowers them to make *Orders* and *By-Laws* (for human Laws are no other) for the well-ordering and governing civil Societies, but it is with this Limitation and *Proviso*, that they be not *repugnant to the Laws of G O D*, which is the Law of Justice, Truth, Mercy and Goodness ; your Laws then must be tempered after the same manner.

There is a great deal of Wisdom and Care required in framing Laws ; the Weaknesses and Corruptions of human Nature in general, as well as the Constitution and Circumstances of a People in particular are to be consider'd : And Penalties are to be adjusted to the Nature & Demerit of Crimes. Do but study the divine Law, and get true Notions of the divine Administration ; and it will be very helpful to you in these Things.

And here I wou'd say, that such Laws, as require Men to *purge* themselves by their *Oaths*, whereby Offenders are brought to this *Dilemma*, either to *accuse* themselves, or to make *Lyes* their Refuge, don't seem to be well accommodated to the present Frame of humane Nature ; and lay too great a Temptation before Men. And I cannot think it Wisdom in any Government to multiply Laws of this Kind. For what is the Design of Laws but to restrain Men's Lusts, and to prevent sinful Disorders, but Laws of such a Nature lay great Temptations

Temptations before Men, and are apt to lead Men into a second Sin, when they have committed the first, and a much greater oftentimes than the first. And I don't remember among all the judicial Laws that GOD gave to his People *Israel*, there is one Law of such a Nature. Indeed there are Laws in *Exod 22 7, — 11*; that at first View may seem to look that Way; but upon a little Observation will appear by no means to come up to the Point; for they are Laws concerning *Trusts*, Goods or Cattle committed to the Trust of another. And very reasonable that the Man to whom the Goods are deposited, should cause them to be forth coming, or upon *Oath* declare what is become of them. But this is widely different from the taking up a Man that is suspected of any Crime, and putting him upon purging himself by *Oath*. But I forbear as to this Matter.

And would go on & say, that as there is scarce any one Thing wherein the publick Justice as well as Peace are so much concern'd, as in the *Medium of Exchange* that passes from Man to Man, and by which the Prices of all Commodities are determined; so this is what you, as the Fathers of this Province, should have a special Regard unto; so far as to regulate and restrain every Thing of this Nature that has a Tendency to Injustice or Oppression.

If any *Acts* made by the former Assembly have in any Measure reached the Malady, and will serve to regulate Things among us, let us be thankful that they were led into them. And I hope this honourable Court will consider what remains further to be done, for fixing the *Value* of the Bills, or the *Value* of *Debts*, and for preventing further Oppression and Injustice to many Sorts of People, but especially to *Widows*, *Orphans* and *fatherless Children*,

dren, who have been exceedingly wrong'd of late Years, by the declining State of our *publick Bills of Credit*

You may perhaps think I am going beyond my Line, but surely *publick Faith and Justice* are to be preached up. If *Paul* reasoned with the *Governor of Righteousness and a Judgment to come*, I know not why I may not *Reason* with this *Government* upon the same important Topicks And here let me say, that if you see any Thing further to be done for the better fixing and establishing the *Value* of our *Bills*, you ought to look upon it as a Piece of publick Justice that you owe to the Country, and must come into it, how much soever it may thwart your private Interest; as you will answer it in that Day wherein GOD shall judge the World in Righteousness.

I doubt not but you will have difficult and perplexed Cases, that will require all your Skill and Wisdom, to conduct and manage aright with respect unto them. May the great GOD who *giveth Wisdom to the Wise, and Knowledge to them that know Understanding*, guide you in all your Counsels, and lead you into such Measures, as shall secure the Rights and promote the Welfare of this People, and at the same time preserve a happy Harmony in the Government.

And here let me assure you from the Oracles of GOD, that *the Integrity of the Upright shall guide them* †. Do but lay aside every Thing that is *private and selfish*, which is a Gift that *bribes and blinds and perverts* the Judgment, and see that you act with a single Eye to the *publick Weal*, and a great deal of the Darkness which is in your Paths will be scattered. For a greater than *Solomon* has old us, * *That the Light of the Body is the Eye, if therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full of*

† Prov. 11. 3. * Matth. 6. 22.

Light: Oh! then believe the Amen, the Faithful, and the true Witness in this, & try what it is to act with a single Eye to the publick Good. Then shall thy Light rise in Obscurity, and thy Darkness be as the Noon-Day, and the Lord shall guide thee continually †.

In the next Place, if your Patience will bear it, I would address my self to the HONOURABLE THE JUDGES of our Courts, and the WORSHIPFULL THE JUSTICES, and all other OFFICERS that have the Execution of the Laws committed to them.

The enacting good and wholesome Laws will signify nothing, without the faithful and impartial Execution of them. And this is but agreeable to the divine Law. For altho' GOD reserved the Power of making Laws for his People Israel to himself; yet he committed the Execution of them to Judges and Officers among themselves, that should be appointed for that End. *Judges and Officers shalt thou make in all thy Gates, and they shall judge the People with just Judgment, thou shalt not wrest Judgment, thou shalt not respect Persons, neither take a Gift; for a Gift doth blind the Eyes of the Wise, and pervert the Words of the Righteous, that which is altogether just shalt thou follow *. Justice, Justice shalt thou follow, as in the Original.*

And this will be to act like GOD himself, and will shew that he has given his Judgments and his Righteousness unto you. *For the Lord your God is God of Gods, which regardeth not Persons, nor taketh a Reward, he doth execute the Judgment of the Fatherless and Widow, and loveth the Stranger, &c. ||*

It is a very great Trust that GOD and the Law commit to you, even the Estates, the Names, the Liberties, yea, the very Lives of the People, sure-

† Isai. 58. 10, 11. * Deut. 16. 18, 19, 20. || Deut. 10. 17, 18.

ly then it concerns you, according to the Charge of *Jehoshaphat* to his Judges *to take heed what you do, for ye judge not for Men, but for the Lord, who is with you in the Judgment,* 2 Chron. 19. 7.

A Judge (says one) is a *living Law*, and ought to be as the Law it self, without *Passion*, without *Partiality*.

The Sword of Justice is put into your Hands, *you must not bear it in vain*, but must so manage it, as to be a *Terror* to them that do *Evil*, and a *Praise* to them that do *well*. — The Law we are sensible is your Rule, and yet there is Room doubtless for the exercising Mercy and Tenderness in some Cases ; for this is but like the Righteousness of GOD himself ; who proclaims himself, *The Lord, the Lord GOD, merciful and gracious, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*, even when at the same Time, *He will by no Means clear the guilty* †, the bold, presumptuous Offenders, that remain obstinate and impenitent. — But now altho' GOD of his infinite Mercy, pardons and saves a great Number of those that have sinned against him ; yet it is in a Way wherein he effectually secures the Honour of his Law and Government, and every Act of Mercy shewn to any Offender must be in such a Way.

We hope in GOD there never will be Occasion for that Complaint of the Prophet among us, that *the Law is slack'd, and Judgment doth never go forth, for the Wicked doth compass about the Righteous, therefore wrong Judgment proceedeth.* *

We have Reason to bless GOD that so many of the Judges Seats, both of the higher and lower Courts are filled with Men of Knowledge, of Justice and exemplary Lives : And may such Men be sought for at all Times, to supply every Vacancy that GOD in his Providence shall make ;

† Exod. 34. 7. * Hab. 1. 4.

and that we may have *Judges as at the first, and Counsellors as at the beginning.* Then shall we be called *the City of Righte usness, and the faithful City.*

But then I apprehend that our Courts being more and more the Courts of Justice, and Engines of Peace to the People, depends very much upon the COUNSELLORS AND PRACTICERS of the Law.

Therefore to the *worthy Gentlemen* of that Profession let me say a Word; and that is, that you would endeavour always so to explain the Law, and apply it to particular Cases, as that the good Design of the Law & of your Office may take Place.

Now the End of the Law as I find it quoted from a Preface of One of your own Profession is this,
 “ *viz.* To comfort such as are grieved, to counsel
 “ such as are perplexed, to relieve such as are
 “ circumvented, to prevent the Ruin of the Im-
 “ provident, to save the Innocent, to support the
 “ Impotent, to take the Prey out of the Mouth
 “ of the Oppressor, to protect the Orphan, the
 “ Widow, and the Stranger. And now, as my
 Author goes on to observe, “ How sad when
 “ any nob’le Faculty as yours, designed for
 “ the Good of Mankind, is made to serve the
 “ Practicers private Advantage, more than the
 “ Benefit of Society ! ||

I have but one *Law-Book* that I shall pretend to recommend to your careful perusal, and that is the HOLY BIBLE, which contains the *Laws, Statutes, and Judgments, the Reports and Records* of the King of Heaven: There you will find, that GOD has given us, as we are told, *right Judgments, and true Laws, good Statutes & Commandments,* Neh. 9. 13. Oh then, Let all your private Counsels, and all your publick Pleas, be such as agree with these Divine Statutes — And if I understand these Laws, they will teach you to make a Difference

|| Dr. LITTLETON in an *Ajizee Sermon.*

between

between Cases that are *just* and *right*, and those that are evidently *wrong* and *unjust* — These Laws will teach you to be very cautious of being the Means of doing any Injustice, by any *wrong Construction* or *Misapplication* of the Laws of Men, or by *Misrepresentation* of Facts, or by *concealing* any Truth that would give light to the Case.

These Laws will put you upon being Counsellors of *Peace*, as well as of *Law*; and to endeavour to *heal* Divisions, rather than *foment* them, or encourage the going on in them.

In short, This divine Law will put you upon being of all the Service you can, both to the *Judges* & the *Juries*, that so just Judgment may proceed and not be perverted. For this Law-Book teaches you that GOD from whom you must take your Measures, does not *pervert Judgment*, neither doth the Almighty *pervert Justice*.

As for you my FATHERS and BRETHREN in the MINISTRY, I shall wave many Things that might properly be said on this Occasion, because a *Convention Sermon* is expected to Morrow from One who is my *Father* in Age and Grace, as well as Gifts; by whom I hope my self to be instructed. † And I will only observe, That as GOD's Judgments and his Righteousness are necessary to make good Rulers in the *State*, they cannot be less necessary to make wise & good Rulers in the *Church*.

Surely it concerns us to be *ready Scribes*, well instructed in the *Law* of our G O D, and in the *Gospel* of his Son. The Priests Lips were to preserve *Knowledge*; and the People were to seek the *Law* at his Mouth, and they that Preach are to speak as the *Oracles* of G O D.

Surely then, It is absolutely necessary for *Ministers* to be well acquainted with the *holy Scriptures*:

† The Rev. Mr. LORING.

Not only to have some certain Portions of Scripture by rote, to use upon all Occasions, but to understand the Meaning of Scripture, and to be able to give the Meaning of it to others — And it was a Concern for a *learned* as well as *godly Ministry*, that stirred up such an early Care in our Fathers, to encourage Schools, and to erect a College, which has now for a *Century* of Years, conferred academical Honours upon the learned Youth, that have been trained up in it. GOD forbid, that an ignorant, and unlearned Ministry should ever rise up in this Land, especially a Ministry that should be ignorant of the Holy Scriptures; or that should think or speak disparagingly of them, or that should insinuate the *Uselessness* of them to *unconverted Men*: Especially when we are told, that *the Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple*, Psal. 19. 7. And no less dangerous is it to insinuate, as if the *Bible* was not very necessary for the *Saints*, by Reason of their having the Spirit to enlighten and direct them. *If the Foundations be destroyed, what can the Righteous do?* The Scripture is that *sure Word of Prophecy, to which we must take heed, as to a Light that shineth in a dark Place*: And if once we neglect this Light, to follow the supposed Dictates of the Spirit, or a *Light within*, I verily fear that the *Light*, which such fancy to be in them, will prove but *Darkness*.

Accordingly we who are the *Ministers of Christ*, and have the glorious Gospel committed to our Trust, should be upon the *Watch-Tower*, to spy out every Thing of such a dangerous Tendency, that we may give seasonable Warnings thereof.

But then it is not sufficient that we understand the Scriptures, and discourse learnedly upon them, and highly recommend them to the Study and Practice of others; but we must see that there be the

the *Righteousness*, the Grace of GOD in the *Heart*, and this *transcribed* and manifested in the *Life*. This is absolutely necessary to a good Minister of Jesus Christ; and altho' without it he may possibly be the Instrument of saving others, yet he will come off most miserably himself. Oh! then let us all look to ourselves very diligently, lest we should fail of the Grace of GOD, and lest while we have been preaching to others, we our selves should be *Cast-aways*.

And surely we ought to take Care that none be admitted into the Ministry, but such as in the Judgment of Charity, we think have this *Righteousness* of GOD in their Hearts, as well as a speculative Knowledge of divine Truths. *Lay Hands then suddenly on no Man.*

Before I shut up, I must entreat you to spare me a Word to the BODY OF THE PEOPLE very briefly. And here let me say, That as the *Judgments*, and the *Righteousness* of GOD are necessary to make *good Rulers* and *good Ministers*, so are they to make a *good People*. The same Rules that will teach, and the same *Righteousness* and Grace that will dispose and enable Rulers to govern aright, are as necessary to direct and dispose you to submit to the Government over you. And the same Laws that empower some to rule, demand Subjection and Obedience from you.

And this is the Gospel Rule, *Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by him, 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers, for there is no Power but of GOD, the Powers that be, are ordained of GOD, whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of GOD, and they shall receive to themselves Damnation Rom. 13. 1, 2.*

Surely then it is not such a light Thing as some imagine, to disobey the lawful Commands of Rulers. For ye *must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience Sake.* And such as have GOD's *Judgments* and his *Righteousness*, they will fear GOD, and honour the King, and
all

all in Authority, obeying their lawful Commands, and rendering to them all their Dues As they will *render to GOD the Things that are GOD's*, so they will *render to Cesar, the Things that are Cesar's*. And therefore such as disobey Magistrates, that begrutch Rulers an honourable Support, that despise Dominion, and take a Liberty to speak Evil of Dignities, it plainly shows that they have not the Word of GOD for their Rule, nor the Grace of GOD for their Principle, whatever they may pretend unto.

And here I would observe, that we have always set up for a religious People, and have gloried in it. I pray GOD that we may by all our Carriages make it more and more evident that this Character does belong unto us. And that the great Awakenings that have been of late, and are still among People, may issue in such a sober, humble, obedient, regular Carriage, as may give us more and more Occasions for Thanksgivings to GOD upon this Account. And let me tell you, that Subjection to Authority is such a very considerable Article in Christianity, that there is no pretending to be Christians, much less reformed Christians without it.

There must be a *willing and obedient People*, as well as *wise and good Rulers*, to make a Government peaceable and happy. There must be the Knowledge of what is right and just, and there must be a Principle of Justice in the *Ruled*, as well as in the *Rulers*, or Things will never go well, nor will the Laws be observed. Without this Knowledge, and without this Principle the Laws of Men won't be strong enough to hold them, but they will *burst those Bands asunder, and cast those Cords from them*.

And this is one Reason why there has been so much Injustice in our Land. For altho' there may have wanted stronger Laws, and more effectual Care in the Government to execute them; yet the *People*, and it is to be feared some of the *Rulers*, by neglecting and running over some of the Laws, have been a Cause of a great deal of the Injustice, and the Confusion that there has been; especially with respect to the *Medium*. If some Laws had been observed, Things would not have been bro't to such a pass as they have been, and are at present.

And now whatever Men may think of themselves, and of their Religion, so long as they despise righteous Laws,
and

and will go into such Methods as tend to *debase the Medium*, and depress its Value, and this with a View to some private Gain to themselves, even when they cannot but know it will injure the publick Justice; I say, whatever they may think of themselves, GOD is far from thinking well of them. *Shall I count them pure with the wicked Ballances; with the Bag of deceitful Weights, and the scant Measure that is abominable, Micah 6. 10, 11.*

TO CONCLUDE,

Let us all unite in an humble fervent Manner to pray, as in the Text, that GOD would give his *Judgments* and his *Righteousness* to the King, and not only to the King as supreme, but to the Governour, and to all in subordinate Places of Power and Trust.

Oh let every Ruler now before the Lord pour out his Heart in Prayer, and say, Lord, give me thy *Judgments*, and thy *Righteousness*; give me to know thy *righteous Will*, and bow my Heart unto it!

And let me say, that if you cannot in some Measure say this, from your Hearts, you are not fit to be trusted in the lowest Offices. For would you have the Reins of Government in your Hands, and not be solicitous to have the Rules of Justice in your Head; and the Principle of right Government in your Heart? Would you have others submit to you as their Rulers, and you not acknowledge your Subjection to the supreme Ruler of the World, your Dependence upon him, and your Accountableness unto him? GOD forbid!

And O let us the *Priests*, the *Lord's Ministers*, be much in Prayer to GOD for our Rulers. We, my *Fathers and Brethren*, meet together with our *honourable Rulers* this Day in the House of the Lord, and what is it for, but that we should rejoice with them, and unite our humble and fervent Prayers with them, and like *Moses and Aaron* fall down before the Lord together, imploring all that Wisdom and Grace for our Rulers that is necessary to guide, dispose, and assist them to act wisely and uprightly in the Elections of this Day, and in all the publick Affairs they shall be concern'd in.

And let all the People say, Amen. O let every one of you lift your Souls to GOD for your Rulers, at this Time, and be much in Prayer to GOD for them. You should do your utmost that there might be good Rulers; and when

when you can do nothing else towards it, you can pray for them.

Some of you that murmur against Government, that complain of this and the other Mismanagement by those in Authority, let me ask you whether you have ever sincerely and heartily *prayed for them*. If not, with what Face can you complain of them? Oh! therefore instead of murmuring and finding fault with Rulers, go to your Closets and pray for them

And Oh! how happy would it be, if by our united, humble, fervent Prayers, we might obtain this Mercy from GOD for our Rulers, even to have his *Judgments* for their *Guide*, and his *Righteousness* for the *Principle* to direct and influence them in all their Conduct.

Then they will judge GOD's People with Righteousness, and his Poor with Judgment. Then there will be a happy Agreement between those in higher and lower Places, and all agree to bring Righteousness and Peace to the People. Yea, the Mountains and little Hills, otherwise dry & barren will bring Prosperity to them—Then GOD will be with us as he was with our Fathers, and will not leave nor forsake us.—Then he will build us up, & not pluck us down.—Then he will give us Favour in the Eyes of the King and of his Counsellors.—Then he will continue us to be the Head and not make us the Tail of the Provinces.—Then he will preserve our precious Liberties and Priviledges unto us.—Then he will enlighten us in all our Darkeness and extricate us out of all our Difficulties.—Then Salvation will be nigh, and Glory will dwell in our Land—Then Truth shall spring out of the Earth, and Righteousness shall look down from Heaven.—Then the Lord shall give that which is good, and our Land shall yield her Increase.—Then the Work of the Lord shall appear to his Servants, and his Glory unto their Children.—Then the Beauty of the Lord our GOD will be upon us, and he will establish the Works of our Hands upon us, yea, the Work our Hands will he establish. AND HAPPY THE PEOPLE THAT IS IN SUCH A CASE, YEA, HAPPY THE PEOPLE WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD.

A M E N.

